

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1372

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 468

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR SW CI

SUBJ: SWEDISH AMBASSADOR TO TELL CHILE STORY IN US

REF: SANTIAGO 468

SUMMARY: HARALD EDELSTAM, RECENTLY PNG'S SWEDISH AMBASSADOR TO CHILE, HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO APPEAR FEB. 28 AT A "CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE" CALLED BY SENATOR HUGHES TO INQUIRE INTO SEPTEMBER 1973 COUP IN CHILE. SWEDISH PRESS, THINKING HE IS TO APPEAR AT A SEANTE COMMITTEE HEARING, QUOTES HIM AS EXPECTING TO INFORM CONGRESS OF "NUMBER OF COINCIDENCES" WITHOUT FLAT-OUT CHARGING US WITH COMPLICITY IN COUP. MFA TELLS US EDELSTAM IS MAKING WASHINGTON TRIP--INCLUDING SUBSEQUENT LECTURE TOUR--AS PRIVATE CITIZEN AND NOT AS GOS REPRESENTATIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS REPORTS THAT SWEDEN'S FLAMBOYANT AMBASSADOR HARALD EDELSTAM, RECENTLY PNG'S FROM CHILE (REFTEL), HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL GO TO WASHINGTON FEB 28 TO TESTIFY BEFORE A "SENATE COMMITTEE" ABOUT CHILE. MEDIA ARE IN SOME CONFUSION ABOUT COMMITTEE, MOST SAYING IT IS FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, OTHERS SAYING IT IS "SENATOR KENNEDY'S" COMMITTEE. EDELSTAM
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HAS ALSO TOLD PRESS HE WILL GO ON LECTURE TOUR OF US

AFTER THE WASHINGTON APPEARANCE.

2. QUERIED BY EMBOFF, MFA AMERICA DESK OFFICER (ELIASSON) SAID THAT EDELSTAM, IN HIS "PRIVATE CAPACITY" AS A SWEDISH CITIZEN, WILL INDEED BE IN WASHINGTON FEB. 28, BUT WILL NOT BE TESTIFYING BEFORE ANY COMMITTEES OF HOUSE OR SENATE. ELIASSON SAID HE WILL TAKE PART IN A "CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE" CALLED BY SENATOR HUGHES. SENATOR KENNEDY WILL PROBABLY ALSO PARTICIPATE. OTHER PARTICIPANTS WILL BE JOURNALISTS, MEMBERS OF FORMER ALLENDE GOVERNMENT, VARIOUS ACADEMICS, AND POSSIBLY A REPRESENTATIVE OF PRESENT CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. ELIASSON HAD NO INFORMATION ON REPORTED LECTURE TOUR. HE SAID EDELSTAM HAS ACCUMULATED CONSIDERABLE LEAVE AND THIS US TRIP WILL BE IN LEAVE STATUS. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON A NEW ASSIGNMENT FOR EDELSTAM, BUT RUMOR HAS IT HE WILL REPLACE AMBASSADOR OBERG IN HANOI. OBERG IS EXPECTED TO END HIS FOUR-YEAR TOUR THIS YEAR.

3. EDELSTAM WAS INTERVIEWED REPEATEDLY DURING WEEKEND ON HIS PLANNED WASHINGTON TESTIMONY, WHICH IS BILLED IN LEFTIST PRESS AS NAILING DOWN US COMPLICITY IN SEPTEMBER COUP. EDESLTAM DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER HE THINKS US WAS INVOLVED IN COUP, BUT LIBERAL EXPRESSEN QUOTED HIM THUS: "PART OF MY SPEECH I WILL DEVOTE TO THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION. I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN CHILE. I COULD OBSERVE WHAT TOOK PLACE. I WILL REFER TO THE FACT THAT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN SANTIAGO LEFT CHILE JUST BEFORE THE COUP AND RETURNED SOON BEFORE IT STARTED. I THINK THAT I HAVE A LOT TO TELL ABOUT THE ROLE OF UNITED STATES." EXPRESSEN SAID PRIMIN PALME HAD APPROVED EDELSTAM TRIP TO WASHINGTON.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AFTONBLADET SAYS EDELSTAM HAS TAKEN ON "THE IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT TASK TO EXPLAIN HOW, WHEN, AND WHY" USG WAS INVOLVED IN CHILE COUP AND ALSO CREDITS HIM WITH FURTHER OBJECTIVE: "I BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE AMERICAN POLICIES ON LATIN AMERICA," HE SAYS. "NIXON ADMINISTRATION
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IS WEAK--IT HAS NOT EVEN A MAJORITY IN CONGRESS."

5. DAGENS NYHETER ON FEB. 4 CREDITS EDELSTAM WITH LESS SOARING AMBITIONS: "IN HIS TESTIMONY EDELSTAM WILL NOT STATE WHETHER HE THINKS US WAS INVOLVED IN THE COUP OR NOT. HE WILL ONLY REFER TO A NUMBER OF COINCIDENCES, WHICH SEEM AS IF THEY WERE PLANNED." DN, GIVING ILLUMINATING INSIGHT INTO EDELSTAM'S STATE

OF MIND, QUOTES HIM AS SAYING OLD-FASHIONED DIPLOMACY SHOULD BE A THING OF THE PAST. "IT IS NECESSARY TO BE CONCERNED," DN QUOTED HIM. "WE MUST SHOW THAT SWEDEN REALLY IS A FRIEND OF THE OPPRESSED AND ENSLAVED NOT ONLY IN WORDS BUT ALSO IN DEEDS.... IT IS IMPORTANT WE SHOW THAT OUR ACTIONS IN VIETNAM AND CHILE WERE NOT ONE-SHOT AFFAIRS...."

COMMENT: EDELSTAM HAS BEEN ON AN EXTENDED EGO TRIP EVER SINCE SWEDISH PRESS HEADLINED HIM FOR TAKING OVER CUBAN EMBASSY IN SANTIAGO LAST SEPTEMBER AND RECEIVING REFUGEES. CURRENTLY ON LEAVE, HE HAS BEEN MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES WITH AND ON BEHALF OF REFUGEES FROM CHILE AND GENERALLY PROPAGANDIZING A PRO-ALLENDE, ANTI-JUNTA LINE AT HOME AND ABROAD. CONVENTIONAL PROFESSIONALS IN MFA HAVE BEEN GRINDING THEIR TEETH OVER EDELSTAM PERFORMANCE BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO RESTRAINT WHATEVER PLACED ON HIM. HIS INTENTION TO MOVE HIS SOAPBOX TO PUBLIC STAGE IN WASHINGTON, AT A DELICATE MOMENT IN US-SWEDEN RELATIONS, COULD MOVE GOS TO REAPPRAISE SITUATION.

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